



Hiring Guide for Managers Of The State of Colorado Personnel System



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ABOUT THIS GUIDE

Dear Manager:

One of the most important management decisions you will make is the selection of a new employee. How can you help to ensure that you get the best person available? How can you work optimally with the state personnel system in completing this crucial task? What is your role in the hiring process? The purpose of this guide is to give you a place to start in answering these questions.

The Manager's Role is Key

Not only are you the immediate hiring decision maker, your role at the very beginning of the hiring process is critical. The initial decisions you make about how to fill your vacancy --- and the way you communicate those decisions to others in the hiring process --- may well determine whether you get the best person available or not.

Use this Guide as a Place to Start

As a state manager with delegated hiring authority, you are a recognized expert in your work area. Your knowledge and experience regarding the vacancy you are about to fill are the immediate factors in determining how the hiring process will proceed in this case. But you will also be supported and assisted in this process by your on-site personnel staff and by the staff of the Division of Human Resources of the Colorado Department of Personnel & Administration. Some aspects of the hiring process may be useful after the hire, as you are developing the new employee's performance plan.

Following is a step-by-step guide on how to use your own resources and those of the personnel system in hiring successfully.

- Step One:** It's your position - What do you want?
- Step Two:** Hiring authorities have many options
- Step Three:** Planning the hiring process with your personnel staff
- Step Four:** Interview carefully!
- Step Five:** Making your selection: Discuss your decision and check references

STEP ONE: It's your position - what do you want?

In your role as a manager, you often have great latitude in deciding how you wish to fill a position based on your particular needs. However, before you begin to look at some of your options, you need to address some basic questions and issues. These include:

- Does a vacancy on the staffing pattern actually exist?
- Are funds available to fill the position? Vacancy savings?
- Has the necessary approval to fill the position been obtained?
- Is there a current position description on file? Have any of the duties of the position substantially changed? Have the essential functions of the job been identified?
- Are there diversity considerations which should be addressed?
- Is succession planning an issue?

After these basic questions and any others unique to your agency have been answered, you are almost ready to begin exploring the different options for filling a position. However, before you can determine which of the options outlined in the next section you wish to use, there are a few other questions which your personnel staff can help you address. These include:

- Does a departmental reemployment list exist for the class? **If so, the reemployment list must be used unless the position is filled by a transfer or a non-disciplinary demotion.**
- Has a layoff in another department resulted in the displacement of employees whom you may want to consider? **Has the Governor imposed any kind of Executive Order mandating that laid off employees be given first consideration for vacancies?**

Other issues which you will want to look at in making your hiring decision are:

- What is the time frame for filling the position? Does the position need to be filled immediately or can some time elapse before the position is filled? If time is not an overriding factor, you may want to consider using a formal testing process. However, if the position needs to be filled immediately, you may want to consider transfers or contacting former state employees who are eligible for reinstatement.
- Does the position require special or hard-to-find qualifications? If so, this will play a large role in your employment decision. You may decide to fill the position through a formal testing process, which typically includes completion of a new job analysis.
- Do other factors need to be considered? For example, you may want to announce your position as a promotional opportunity to provide growth for existing staff.
- Do you have a good mix of employees in terms of enthusiasm, experience, diversity and perspective? Is there a path that allows for promotion and career development?
- Do you need to grow your own staff in-house through promotions, or can you rely on the labor market for experienced candidates for employment?
- Has the organizational mission changed, and does this affect the individual who will fill the position?

After you have addressed the issues outlined above, you will want to consider the following methods which you may use in filling your vacancy.

STEP TWO: Hiring Authorities Have Many Options

FASTEST – No testing required; hiring can be completed in a few days

NOTE: All appointees must meet minimum qualification for the class; for those appointees indicated with a + qualifications must be verified. For transfer applicants, it is also necessary to verify that applicants are eligible for transfer to the class for which the appointment will be made.

May be considered first, or concurrently with other options

- + transfer
- + non-disciplinary demotion

Must be considered next, if above options are not used:

- + reemployment list within the division or department

May be considered next, if no department or division reemployment list exists:

- + reappointment - current employee (appointment to same, equivalent or related class as one from which previously demoted)
- + reinstatement - former employee (appointment to same, equivalent or related class as previously employed in)
- + reemployment list for other departments

RAPID - But may require testing (if more than three qualified persons apply); hiring can be completed in a few weeks

NOTE: *Testing is required if more than three qualified persons apply for a vacant position. Because of the constitution and statutes, the merit principle applies and only the three highest-ranking persons may be referred for a hiring interview.

May be considered next:

- division promotional announcement (if a statutorily created division)
- department promotional announcement
- servicewide (statewide) promotional announcement

MOST TIME-CONSUMING - But may be greatest opportunity to get best-qualified; hiring may be completed in four to nine weeks

- open competitive selection

After considering and deciding on the best option(s) for your needs, you are ready to call your agency human resources (HR) staff for assistance in beginning the process to fill your vacant position.

Use the following information (Step Three) for your meeting with your departmental human resources staff, to ensure that your discussion covers all the important aspects of selection to

meet your needs.

STEP THREE: Planning the Hiring Process with Your Human Resources Staff

Throughout the process of selecting a new employee, you will be working closely with your agency human resources staff to collect and exchange valuable information and to develop and implement the most efficient hiring plan for your vacancy.

Although each human resource specialist will tailor a format to the unique characteristics of the vacancy and needs of your department, a common focus and main objective of any hiring plan is to attract and hire the most qualified and productive person for the job.

Before your first meeting with your department's human resources staff, you should consider, research and assemble certain general information. As the hiring authority and subject matter expert for your vacancy, you should review the items in the following checklist to prepare for initial discussions with your personnel staff.

1. Think about the nature of the POSITION

- Read the Position Description Questionnaire (PDQ) and Class Description (CD) for the vacancy. These are available from your human resources staff. Revise the PDQ if necessary. Ensure that the essential functions of the job have been identified.
- Review how the position fits into the overall organizational structure of the department, division and/or work unit.
- Identify the primary goals and objectives of the position.
- Consider the primary tasks, duties and activities of the position, particularly those which are most important for successful job performance. The tasks identified could then be used when the new performance plan is developed.
- Review performance evaluation criteria for previous incumbents, to help identify the most important job elements.

2. Outline how you would describe the "ideal" PERSON for the position

- Determine the competencies a qualified individual must possess and demonstrate.
- Note which of the competencies are critical in order to differentiate superior from barely acceptable applicants, and ultimately, to identify the best qualified candidate(s).
- List the minimum qualifications (i.e., education, experience, licenses, etc.) the person should possess in order to perform the job.

3. Identify the best RECRUITMENT STRATEGY to attract qualified individuals

- Thoroughly review your options for filling the vacancy (as discussed in Step Two: Hiring Authorities Have Many Options) and realistically explore the time frames within which you want to fill the position.
- Evaluate the geographic location, the current labor market, any unique aspects of the position which might deserve additional attention in advertising.
- Anticipate how many are likely to apply and/or try to forecast what you might expect

from your “connections.” Identify employers or persons who may be sources of potential applicants or who can provide advice about recruiting.

4. Miscellaneous considerations

- If the vacancy is NOT a newly created position, information from previous appointments can be helpful. (Depending upon the availability of historical data for the vacancy, you will work with your human resources office during the job analysis to confirm or modify important job information to aid in test development.)
- If testing will be required, contemplate which type(s) of test(s) (e.g., written, oral, performance) might best assess the competencies which are critical to successful job performance. Your human resources staff will assist you with this.

5. Final preparations (last, but not least)

- Determine the availability of other “subject matter experts” to assist in exam development and/or evaluation, employment interviewing, etc.
- Verify that all necessary paperwork has been completed and processed.
- Decide if you will want to review applicant information other than (or in addition to) the job application, and if so, when. For example do you want the top three individuals from a testing process to submit official transcripts or additional job references?
- Confirm that candidate qualifications have been verified.

List any questions you have about any facet of the hiring process. Before concluding the initial meeting, ensure that your questions have been answered **AND** confirm that both you and your human resources staff member have the same expectations as to how the remainder of the selection process will occur. Arrange your next meeting/contact and note any necessary preparation.

Once selection activities, including testing and referral of the top three candidates, are completed, your next step will be to interview the candidates referred to you for your vacancy. Use the following information (Step Four) to assist you in developing and conducting effective interviews.

STEP FOUR: Interview Carefully

Once you decide how to fill the position you will interview applicants to decide which person to hire. Usually the interviewer will be the supervisor or appointing official authorized to make a selection. You may wish to include a team of employees who will be working with the individual selected. Hiring decisions based on team interviews often result in hiring highly qualified employees who are readily accepted by their peers.

The interview process is your opportunity to ask the candidates questions to assist you in determining if s/he is the “best fit” for your job. You may wish to conduct a very structured interview with a prepared description of the job and office procedures, as well as a “standard” set of questions that will be asked of each candidate. Research has shown that a well-structured interview process typically produces more effective hiring decisions. Or the interview may be a “conversation” between you and the applicant.

Whichever interview format you select, it is important to limit inquiries to areas related to the job. Inquiries not related to the job must be avoided. During the interview you should talk about the job, its duties and responsibilities; the organization, its programs, achievements and benefits;

career possibilities and opportunities for growth, development, and advancement; and the individual's qualifications, abilities, experience, education, interests, and competencies.

It is also important to remember that under the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) it is illegal to refuse to hire a qualified individual on the basis of a disability if, with or without reasonable accommodations, the person can perform the essential functions of the job. If the candidate is a person with a disability who requests a reasonable accommodation, you may wish to contact your human resource office or your department ADA coordinator concerning the provision of the accommodation.

The **Colorado Civil Rights Division** can provide you with a guide that advises what inquiries are lawful and unlawful in an interview.

Remember to ask yourself, "How does the question I'm asking relate to the job?", before you ask it during an interview. Contact your human resources office for assistance if you are uncertain if an inquiry you wish to make is legal.

STEP FIVE: Make your Selection: Discuss Your Decision and Check References

After interviewing the candidates for your vacant position, you will probably have a good idea of which person you want to hire. You may want to consider discussing your decision with your staff and with your supervisor, in order to get their final ideas, to reality check the information you have seen in the interview process and to expose any biases you may have.

This is also a good time to double check the information you have been provided. For example, does the doctor, nurse, engineer, CPA or attorney you are about to hire have a Colorado license in good standing? Have you checked with previous employers and read recent performance evaluations? A final reference check now may save a great deal of time, embarrassment or legal liability later.

Continue to work with your human resources staff

A final discussion with your human resources staff is important. This is an opportunity to review how well the hiring plan worked and to plan for future hiring processes.

In addition to informing personnel of your hiring decision and completing the hiring paperwork, take this opportunity to tie up any loose ends, such as planning to inform the unsuccessful candidates by a timely and courteous letter, and perhaps referring the best of them to other job openings.

When you encounter excellent employee candidates, make sure you alert your colleagues and other state offices. The list of persons referred to you can be used by other managers who are seeking to fill positions with the same qualifications.

If you believe that none of the persons you have interviewed is right for the job, you will need to consult your human resources staff to plan the next steps in your hiring process.

Hiring: Another Beginning

Now that you have made your hiring decision, you have come to the end of one process and the beginning of another.

In addition to making sure that your new employee receives an orientation and signs the necessary disclosures and other paperwork required of state employees, you will also need to develop a performance plan within 30 days of the hire date, and a training plan that will ensure adequate development of your new employee.

This is the beginning of the probationary period for new employees and trial service for promoted employees. This time is the “final exam” for the newly hired employee. Use this time to determine if you made a good hiring decision. The employee should display good work habits, and the competencies needed for the job. This is the time that you, as the hiring manager, can have the greatest impact on the success or failure of the new employee on the job.

Within a year following the effective date of your hiring decision, you will be required to decide whether or not to certify your new employee. Check with your human resources staff to find out the exact date. If the hiring process has worked well and if you have made a good choice and trained your employee well, certification should not be a problem.

Plan to use all your resources, including the experience of your human resources staff as you continue to make these hiring and retention decisions.

ABOUT THE HIRING GUIDE

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